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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

3 September 1963

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: South Vietnam's Leaders

1. It has been doubtful for a long time whether the Ngo family could provide the kind of unifying national leadership necessary to win the counterinsurgency struggle, reduce the Viet Cong threat to the level of local police action, and restore a modicum of tranquillity to the countryside. This has been doubtful largely because the regime has failed to win the popular support and loyalty necessary to such an effort and because it has alienated a large proportion of the competent Vietnamese politicians and administrators whose support and assistance would be an invaluable aid in governing the country and combatting the Viet Cong.

2. The Ngo family's handling of the Buddhist crisis and particularly its actions during a past few weeks now lead us to conclude that this family cannot lead the country to victory. Its actions have intensified the disaffection of most politically articulate Vietnamese with the regime and its methods and further reduced its chances of ever winning the

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popular support and loyalty necessary to victory over the Viet Cong. Moreover, the regime has further deepened its distrust of the US, which will further reduce the US-Vietnamese cooperation at all levels which is probably essential to victory.

3. In addition, we observe that several of the other non-Communist governments of Asia strongly disapprove the conduct of the Diem regime, and the US, because of its close connection with Diem, has received some share of this disapproval.



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5. No one can guarantee that a new regime would be more successful than the present one in achieving US objectives. The accomplishments of a successor government would depend upon the character and competence of the individuals who composed it, the appeal it could make to the people at large and, above all, the degree to which it could command united support from

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the army. It appears to us possible, though far from certain, that new rulers could be found who would satisfactorily fill the requirements.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:



ABBOT SMITH
Acting Chairman

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TRANSMITTAL SLIP		DATE 3 September 1963
TO: DCI		
ROOM NO. 7D60	BUILDING Hq.	
REMARKS:		
<p style="text-align: right;"><i>DDI/WE</i></p> <p>CONCUR: <u>R. J. Smith</u> Acting DD/I</p>		
FROM: <i>7D</i> O/NE		
ROOM NO. 7E48	BUILDING Hq.	EXTENSION

FORM NO. 241
1 FEB 55

REPLACES FORM 36-8
WHICH MAY BE USED.

GPO : 1957-O-439445 (47)

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